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cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own generation, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades,-a belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?" ' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

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law to avoid her father-in-law, another informant said: 'It is forbidden to look at fathers-in-law. If we do look then we shall not die well, we shall long to die and not be able to do so, because both those below (the dead) and those above (the living) are angry. Yes, it is the witches we mean when we say "those above".'

### *c. The age-village and medicines*

Unlike the belief in witchcraft and 'the breath of men', which mainly affects relationships within a village, or the ancestor cult which is confined to the relations between kinsmen, and between chief and people, the use of medicines (*imikota*)[1] enters into every type of relationship in Nyakyusa society. Medicines are employed to win success in almost every undertaking: cultivating, herding, hunting, love-making, war. They are regarded as one of the main props of authority; the impressiveness (*ubusisya*) of a chief, and the power of a village headman to command, being directly related to the medicines with which they are treated (*vide supra*, pp. 24–5). They are resorted to for the promotion of fertility, for the treatment of the sick, and for protection and retaliation generally, as well as the means of directly harming an enemy. Medicines are believed to operate along with other mystical powers. For example, they are an essential element in rituals directed to the ancestors, and they are used for the discovery of witchcraft (in the ordeal) as well as for protection against it, and for the treatment of patients thought to have been 'eaten' by the witches or chilled by 'the breath of men'. Used alone, medicines are held to be ineffective against witchcraft or 'the breath of men', but they are regarded as a useful complement to other action, such as the banishment of the witch or the repentance of the sinner.

The power of witchcraft or of defence against witches (*amanga*) is connected with medicines, for it is thought often to be acquired for defensive purposes (and more rarely for aggressive purposes) through drinking medicines (*vide* pp. 25, 221). But the powers of witchcraft, or witch defence, and of medicines are quite distinct; the one implies a peculiar physical condition, the presence of one or more pythons in the belly, whereas the other may be bought from a doctor and used by anyone, and its

[1] The root *-kota* implies something derived from a plant. cf. *iki-kota*, a wooden stool.

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mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which concern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders. There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

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tween the kinsmen about the amount of property to be destroyed. 764
Once we saw the sons of a dead man tugging at two fine mats which his sister was folding into the cave. She wished to put them in but the sons opposed her, saying: 'Why should we spend all the mats? We have buried him, he is dead.'

It is held to be most important that earth should not touch the corpse's face, but once the cave has been closed the chief mourners each push a few handfuls of earth into the grave, the rest of the earth is filled in, and the dancers stamp it hard. Soon no sign of the grave remains.

(*b*) *The terror of death*

Death to the Nyakyusa is a fearful thing. They believe that the 761
spirit (*unsyuka*) of a dead man survives underground (*pasi*) in the 775
place of the shades (*ubusyuka*) and that it can and does visit sur- 765
viving relatives in dreams and materially affect their destinies. The shades of the dead are one of the final causes with which their religion deals. But contact with them is feared and the function of the ritual at the funeral is 'to drive the shade away'. This ritual begins during the burial (*ifwa*) and continues in a series of rites which last for a month or longer. At the burial itself people's attention is mainly concerned with the death as an emotional event, with the fact that a father, a mother, a kinsman or a neighbour has died; but into the emotional quality of death their religious beliefs enter. With the shades they desire no close contact, for the most usual dreams of the dead are those in which they reproach a man for some sin, or foretell his death; their commonest activity is believed to be the sending of madness and misfortune upon sinful men. Nor is it desirable to join the shades oneself. The place of the shades is a vague and shadowy land where no certain happiness is traditionally believed to be. 'No one', said an old man, 'has ever been there and come back to tell us about it. When the dead come to us in dreams they do not show us where they live nor tell us about their life. We do not know what we shall find there. But we do not think that we shall have happiness, or friendly intercourse.' 'He has died and we shall never meet again,' said another man of his dead neighbour. Some old men, however, have definite theories about the place of the spirits, and all agree that wealth is important there; but these theories have no certainty: 'We are just guessing.' It is certain that the dead continue to live somehow, for they are believed to affect

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the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

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764 the killing has a legal implication, for the death of a man involves
768 the transfer of his wives and property to another. If the inheritance is quite clear and disputes are unlikely, then a 'father' of the dead man tells the heir to kill the burial cattle. All the people present see him do this and know that he is the heir. And if the inheritance is, after all, denied him later, then the fact that he killed the cattle at his brother's (or father's) funeral gives him a strong *prima facie* claim to its recovery in the courts. If the inheritance is doubtful then a 'father' of the dead man kills the cattle. It is known that he himself cannot inherit and his killing of the cattle is an assertion of his authority to decide who shall do so.

643 When a man of the chief's lineage dies, a live cow is buried with
764 him and the more general custom of taking a cow or bull to look into the grave is interpreted as being 'like burying the cow'. The cattle used in this way must be of the lineage stock and are reserved for sacrifice.

764 All the cattle killed are thought to go with the shade to the land
775 of the dead (*abuke nasyo kubusyuka*) and it is believed that if he goes without any cattle he may be rejected by his kinsmen there. Tales are told of meeting dead men in the bush with their cattle which were killed for them. A cloth is a substitute for a cow and cloths which are buried likewise go with the dead. 'We will meet in the land of the shades and he will be wearing these cloths.' At one burial we saw, the dead man had left no cows of his own but his brothers killed two cows for him, three beasts were brought by affines, and sixteen cloths were brought by kinsmen, affines, and friends. 'Why', we asked, 'do you spend so much wealth at death?' 'Because, we say, as the owner has died let him take his wealth with him to the place of the shades. If he dies in lonely poverty he goes with nothing.' At another burial two beasts were brought by kinsmen, six by affines and one by a friend. There were thirty-two cloths, fifteen brought by kinsmen, twelve by affines, and five by friends. 'The bringing of cloths is to express sympathy (*kukuti ndaga*); we bury many of them with the corpse, and some we leave over, which we bind on as mourning belts (*amakiba*). Of old, people brought the cloth the Safwa weave, and brass body-rings. It means: "May our fellow go with them; may he swagger with them—with the cloth and body-rings (*ko kuti umwinetu abukege nafyo, a mogege nafyo*)." And we pour out food that he may take it with him.'

764 During the course of the war-dance (described below) the young

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765 768 washing and the throwing away of a stem of bananas and leaves in a stream, and bringing back a hen and bark-cloth; eating a mash on the hearth; the brewing of beer with the millet presented; a ritual drinking and further shaving when this is ripe; an admonition of the heir on his duties and acknowledgement of him as 'father' by the children of the deceased; sexual intercourse between the heir and the widows he inherits; the burial by each inherited woman of some of the fluids from that intercourse in her father's banana grove, and a ritual drinking of beer with her father and other close relatives.

If the deceased is a woman her brother comes to cut her husband's banana grove and seize her children, as a sign that kinship between the lineages has ceased, but he is dissuaded with gifts, and treats his sister's children with medicines. A sister is sent to replace the dead woman, the widower has intercourse with her at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair', and she returns home to bury some of the fluids in her father's grove, and drink beer with him ritually.

An account of one of the rituals which we attended in Selya which is quoted in the documents (p. 234) may give some reality to this stark outline.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

765 764 828 When asked why the ritual of death is performed the first reply of Nyakyusa informants was that they were driving away (*ukukaga*) the dead and that if it were neglected those for whom it should have been performed would go mad (*ukubopa ikigili*). Angombwike explained: 'In the death ritual they drive away the shade (*unsyuka*) saying: "Why are you always at me, nagging at me, in dreams?" It is to swear at him (the shade) and drive him away.'

Another informant explained: 'The touching of the earth is the expression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not!' Another confirmed this saying: 'The powdered medicine and touching the earth are alike; 765 they wish to stop him (the deceased) coming into our dreams.' 764 And an Ndali informant said: 'Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their bodies.'

775 There is also the implication of speeding the deceased on his way to the land of the shades, for it is believed that if the ritual is not performed he will not be welcomed by his dead kinsmen and will continue to haunt the living. Of an unfinished death ritual

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people say: '*Tukali ukunkesya unsyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukesya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend." '

The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*inwili sya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

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764 765 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]

●775 KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*unsyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 765 828 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not perform the ritual, and madness (*ikigili*), or perhaps you will have a lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 764 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades. What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the 764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; because 765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth. 828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

[177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform 764 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear 765 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a 775 ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy 826

[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukoma amalago.*
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

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(*banyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . When a man dies his heart (*indumbula*) and his body (*umfimba*) separate, they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow (*ilisyungulu*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground. The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative) they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground, and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of *ilingolongofwa* creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them away into the river.

QUESTION: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KASITILE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him: 'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe, we cast it away.

QUESTION: The washing at the door with medicine?

KASITILE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we are just going to take filth (*indafu*) in our hands—to take the bananas and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the bananas. It is taboo (*muiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the beer which they drink on the path after anointing themselves.

QUESTION: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KASITILE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

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water when we bathe we make a separation—they take a stem of bananas, and a bark-cloth, and a hen to the water. The bananas they throw away—that is the corpse; the hen and the bark-cloth they bring back to the homestead and the officiant takes them home with her—that is the shade, is not the shade in the house with us? Do we not pray to him?

QUESTION: Putting food into the pot?

KASITILE: This food is the filth of the body. We say: 'We cast you from us, let our hearts be purified; the mud we smeared on our faces we cast it away, all our body casts you away. We are not corpses; we are putting you to rights and shaving your hair, go away to your fellows.' We begin to get rid of the earth we had on our faces so that we may anoint ourselves again. In our lineage we eat only bean mash, not bananas and millet porridge, we differ in our rituals.

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish on to legs and the weeping?

KASITILE: This means: 'We begin to cast you off wholly, let all the ritual that is left come to us, we throw it away.' The measures of millet are to tell the shade that So-and-so has brought millet and is doing his ritual. 'Do not think he is angry with you,' we tell him, 'he has brought this millet.' The throwing of millet from the winnowing basket on to the participants' heads as they stand in a line outside means that we cast him away, we are taking him to the river—at the river we throw away the corpse. They throw away the leaves and the stem of bananas.

QUESTION: Hitting the heads with a banana sapling in the doorway?

KASITILE: They hit the participants on the head, that is the *ndweka* disease of the dead man,[1] we are setting them to rights.

QUESTION: The stem of bananas, hen, and bark-cloth?

KASITILE: The stem of bananas is the corpse, they leave it in the water with the leaves; the bark-cloth and hen are the shade which they bring into the house.

QUESTION: The circling with the pot and putting in of food?

KASITILE: This is the shade whom they bring into the house (*bikumbeka*) when they have brought him from the water. The banana flower they bury is the same as the leaf they wear, it is the corpse which they throw away in the water.

Yes, we separate the corpse and the shade with all our might, the earth we rub our bodies in is the corpse, we throw it into the water and the shade we bring back to the house. The eating of the bean mash on [177] the wall (the old custom) and on the hearth (both old and contemporary) that is the shade in the house. He warms himself by the fire in the house, we pray to him. Putting food into the pot means: 'Leave our

[1] Not clear to me.—M. W.

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bodies altogether, go away to your friends, sit here by the hearth and warm yourself.'

QUESTION: The grinding of millet flour on to bark and the subsequent anointing of the participants with this flour in a paste, before shaving?

KASITILE: This means: 'This is your food that you ate, we give it to you.' And the smearing on the hair means: 'We have finished your ritual for you, we have left nothing out, bear us no grudge.'

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish (*imindu*) on to the participants' legs?

KASITILE: The rubbish is the rubbish of death, it is dirt. 'Let it come now,' we say. 'Let it not come later, may we never run mad.' The wailing (during sweeping) means: 'Go away, farewell!' We have finished the burial now, it will never be done again save once more at the beer.

QUESTION: The basket of millet between legs and over heads?

KASITILE: That is to drive him away, to tell him: 'Do not return to these your relatives here, you were in their bodies, now you are separate, we have driven you away, you are no relative of ours!' All that we do in the house there means that he is in our bodies and we are going to cast him out. The flour on the shoulder is like the flour paste in the hair, this is the corpse, we throw it away.

QUESTION: The song 'We are startled by the shade' (*Tunyomwike ilindu*)?

KASITILE: The *ilindu* is the shade, we are startled.

QUESTION: How startled?

KASITILE: Ha! Are you not startled when you run mad?[1] The heart is terribly startled, it curls upwards; when they say this phrase: 'We are startled by the *ilindu*' they quiet the heart and make it lie down again. Let him go away and be startled with his fellows!

QUESTION: The word *ilinwanwa* (the croaking bird)?

KASITILE: That is the shade that broods on the body. 'Friend,' we say to him, 'we have put you to rights, do not come to us, oh croaking bird.'

QUESTION: The ritual as a whole?

KASITILE: It means: 'We have given you everything, we have eaten filth on the hearth'—for if one runs mad one eats filth, faeces. . . .

QUESTION: What is the symbolism of pouring water on the thatch and running through the drops?

KASITILE: The ritual has many parts. We teach a person that he should do it properly and not leave out anything. Do we not fear (*ukutila*) the water for washing, the water of the corpse? When heavy rain falls do we not flee from the downpour and enter the house? That is how it is then. We mimic what he did when he was alive. . . .

[1] *Ukunyomoka ilindu* is used also for an epileptic fit.

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768 It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before
[784] the ritual[1] is over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is
[833] finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the semen refuses to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyitu, ifyitu, tunyomwike ilindu*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mindu* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akindile ubunyago*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their
[831] legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibalaga* and with meat; the first is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibalaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibalaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

768 The *ilibalaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the
●775 shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

[643] QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

643 KASITILE: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has
768 intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the
833 man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mindu*.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the semen comes.

775 The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the
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[1] [i.e. the farewell to the dead.--Analyst]

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lentil is the shade, the millet is the shade, the pumpkin-seed is the shade. The doctor takes them away home and eats them, that means that the shades have gone away. The words they say: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' mean: 'The semen is ours, the shades have supported him, they have given us the semen, they have not bound it.' For if the shades are angry they bind him and the semen does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the shades will bind his semen at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*imbapo*) does not belong to the shades but to Kyala, but if the shade is angry he binds it.

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the shade. It is the filth which madmen catch hold of, it is the faeces which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his semen. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his lifetime. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and semen of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband eats . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the shade, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the semen] because the shade and the semen are brothers.[1]

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the shade, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [semen] and the filth of madness; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and lentils and pumpkin-seeds at the beer when he has finished coitus with the women it also has a double symbolism (*fyope fyo fifwani fibili*); the seed is the blood [semen]—Ours, ours—and it is the shade who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *ikipiki* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the death ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the shades, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the shade says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *ikipiki* is our intestine.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kasitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the litter in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. *Ulukungu*: semen; *inyungu*: pumpkin-seed.
[2] *Ubula bwa kikolo*: 'the intestine of the lineage'; the large intestine.

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QUESTION: The banana and the pumpkin-seeds?

MWANDISI: These are the ritual which we—I the man, and she the woman—perform at the end, they are the sexual intercourse. The pumpkin-seed and the lentil and the millet are the blood of the man, the banana is his procreative power (*mbapo jake*). The pumpkin-seed ritual is important—when we have finished it then I go to my wife and do not fear her, but Lubabelo begins. Before the pumpkin-seed ritual it is completely taboo.

QUESTION: And the beer?

MWANDISI: That is not important, but the pumpkin-seed ritual is. But when a man has died then his wife must not approach the heir until the beer ritual.

QUESTION: Then the lust for copulation always comes from the shades?

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MWANDISI: Yes, desire comes from the shades. If they are angry you are impotent and cannot beget a child; and sometimes also you are impotent because the umbilical cord (*ululela*) has fallen on your mother.

MWANDISI'S WIFE: When my husband says in his heart: 'I shall go to my wife', that comes from the shades.

QUESTION: The umbilical cord?

MWANDISI'S WIFE: It is completely taboo for it to fall on the loins, then the child will not develop, it will be sterile and not bear (or beget) a child. And the mother herself will not bear again, she will not conceive again. . . . A woman cries a great deal with the pain in her belly until the cord comes away: when it has come away then she is filled with wonder and does not cry.[1]

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MWANDISI: Pumpkin-seeds are used by us and the people of Selya; the Kukwe perform the ritual with beans, and the people of Ngonde with fish and beer. . . .

QUESTION: Why do the heir and wife appear to refuse when caught in the ritual?

MWANDISI: Because someone has died. Should they rejoice therefore? If they rejoice it seems as if they wished their relative to die.

QUESTION: Do they fear the dead will harm them if they appear to rejoice?

MWANDISI: No, they fear those above [i.e. the living] lest they laugh at them. They are ashamed. But sometimes a woman really refuses. She fights and fights, and struggles and struggles, and says: 'No.' Her friends (the women) hit her and put her in the house, then when she has come out of the house she runs off, she flees.

QUESTION: The ashes and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper?

MWANDISI: They are signs of mourning, they give them to the

[1] The umbilical cord, *ululela*, is literally the 'cord of weeping'.

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MWANDISI: The sausages of porridge stuck in the ground and sprinkled with powdered medicine which each stoops and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*musito munda*) and not have diarrhœa, it is to make faeces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each sausage of porridge is left in the ground]; that means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhœa at their homes! They will get it really!

QUESTION: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in-law, his widows?

MWANDISI: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food!' We scold them very much and they weep tears.

QUESTION: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and bring him back to the house.

MWANDISI: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to the house.

QUESTION: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

MWANDISI: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an unrelated person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we run mad, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

QUESTION: You performed the ritual for Lubabelo's child yourselves?

MWANDISI: Yes, she was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relatives. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual *must* be performed for all *relatives* (*abakamu*). . . .

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin-seeds are passed between the straddled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of man and woman, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Apa tukunyagula tukumalisya mboleli nunyambala nunkikulu, po*

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764 *ifi fikusoka kukyeni nanyambala bo basyuka, bo baputile abasyuka tukubakaga: lenga tukanyagwila tukubopa ikigili! Abasyuka bo bakasokaga bikujamo; papo lenga tumalile po basokile munda. Loli bikwandesya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!*)

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ukubumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

●775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Unsyuka ikusyuka itolo mumbeli gwa mwanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDISI: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDISI: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDISI: It is the semen (*ulukungu*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDISI: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
[761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembela ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

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not die. That comes from the shades when they are angry and say: 'We shall see!' It is to be finished off.

QUESTION: So the shades always come at death?

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MWANDISI: Yes. See, Mwafyuma who died [the old Mwafyuma, a classificatory brother of Mwandisi, died the day before yesterday]. I dreamed at night of Mwakalukwa [a classificatory son of Mwandisi who died about 1932] and in the morning I told X here [his son-in-law who lives near was sitting with us and at once assented, 'Yes, he told me'] that I had dreamed of Mwakalukwa, and there were many deaths in the country—the people of Kisale were mourning and the peopleof Ndemba and that Mwakalukwa had said to me: 'Where are we dead to care for those who come?' And I said to X: 'If someone comes from Mwaya you will see that someone has died.' That very day my son here [Pugana his son was sitting near] came and said: 'Mwafyuma has died.'

This dream of Mwandisi's was cited as a proof that the shades come to receive a man at death. They came to Mwandisi in a dream—the shade of Mwakalukwa came, which he took to mean that the death was to be in Mwakalukwa's country, not Mwakalinga's.

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QUESTION: You said the shades come to receive a man killed by witches. Have they no power to drive away witches?

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MWANDISI: No, the shades have not the power to drive away the witches but Kyala drives them away.

QUESTION: Kyala? You mean the headman of the village!

MWANDISI: Yes, the headman drives them off, Kyala gave him the power (or duty).

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

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KISOULE: We begin by burying the flowering head of an *ilitoki* banana—that is a person—then we rub forehead, elbow, and knee in the earth there and go to bathe. We push away the earth, that means our business above here (in the world of the living) is finished, we have really buried you, do not come here above, go to your place (below), in the world of the shades.

MWAILAPE (a Christian): They throw the stem of bananas into the water and the bark and feathers, but if it is a fowl and the bark is good, they take them back and they belong to the officiant. Throwing away the stem of bananas means: 'We are driving you (the shade) away. Be off!' The millet which is tossed in the faces of the participants is also thrown away in the water. Tossing it in their faces means: 'This is your food which you cultivated, go away with it.'

MWAKISILE AND OTHERS: The touching of the ground is the ex-

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764 pression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not.

QUESTION: Why the medicine?

MWAKIHEKLE: It is a ritual, a custom. The medicine and the touching of the ground are the same thing, they wish to stop him coming into our dreams.

QUESTION: Why do you eat bananas?

MWAKIHEKLE: We eat the main food of the country.

QUESTION: Why the fighting for the porridge?

MWAKIHEKLE: This is still to wish him good-bye, it is the end of the ritual. We must finish or he, the dead man, will not go away, half of him will still be there.

QUESTION: Why the beer?

MWAKIHEKLE: Beer is the drink of the country just as bananas are the food. The drinking is to finish saying good-bye. When we have eaten and drunk then we have done with him altogether. Before this he comes time after time into our dreams. If you do not perform the ritual some people say that when you get sick you will never die, but always be sick. If you are sick they will remember and say: 'Let us make beer for ritual.' That is why all must bring some millet to the ritual to ensure a quiet and easy death. Eating and drinking like this is the custom. Something bad will happen to the lineage if it is not done. To refuse to participate is to separate from your lineage.

MPOOO: At the ritual there should be many foods. The bean is there and we eat it; the lentil is there and we eat it; millet is there and the
764 banana and pumpkin-seed. That means: 'You shade, do not think that
● 775 there was little food at your ritual; the food which we have eaten with you, you have eaten.' Yes, the shade himself eats. We sprinkle on the earth (*pasi*)[1] whither you (the shade) have gone, meaning: 'Do not create hunger, bless the children that they may eat food and not just wander about.' If we do not perform the ritual properly the children will get thin, the shade says: 'You have not unloosed me, I am just on the road.' There should be many foods which means that we have given you (the shade) all the food which we men eat. The banana in which we put seeds is the corpse. The shades eat food, we dream that we eat with them, and if they are angry the beer in the house goes bad, and the milk goes bad.

764 Angombwike (the Christian son of a famous doctor) agreed, in answer to questions, that 'the eating of filth by madmen is like the filth of death, those faeces are the corpse'.

764 MWAKIDEN'S FRIEND (a man of 35 or 40): We perform the ritual that
775 Kyala may receive him, that the shades may receive him, because

[1] *Pasi*: below and implies both *on* the ground and *underground*.

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ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above.

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwenpo*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUMBA (a doctor) AND MWAIYUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki ke kukawa kwetu, ye ilopa lwetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*akasuma akikolo kwetu, kakapwaise, mundu kilimo, aka nkuma gwake*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

### 2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

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158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
684 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
● 775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
755 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injini*)—the man lets everything
787 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal. And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

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764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?
MWAKALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

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763 deed. We wash at the eating of millet to say: 'You shade, this millet which we eat comes to you because you brooded over us.' We wash our hands and mouths.

764 QUESTION: Why do you eat millet?

● 765 MWASALEMBA: The millet belongs to the shade. When we brew beer we put some in a calabash cup, but it is not drunk, it is left for five days and becomes lees [i.e. the liquid dries up], then we say: 'The shade has drunk it.'[1] We pray to him and say: 'He is angry.' We brew beer and pour it out in the banana grove, and say: 'You shade, what are you angry about, why have you brooded over the beer?' (They go first to divine.) We speak in the evening in the banana grove and all the children listen, and my wife in the house.

Similarly, if a cow calves and then does not take to its calf, does not lick it, then doctors say: 'The shades have caught hold of the cow, they have brooded over it. Then I pray with water only [in the other case there is both blowing out water and pouring of beer], and I speak as before. Then in the evening the cow takes to its calf and we say: 'The shades refused to let it recognize its calf.' That beer stays for two days —it's not strong!

764 QUESTION: The licking porridge off the mid-rib of the banana leaf?

MWASALEMBA: We eat porridge and he [the shade] eats. We eat off the mid-rib of the banana leaf because the banana grove is the shade's. When someone has died we cut the banana grove, and in the banana grove we pray. It is the shade's own.

764 QUESTION: Throwing beans into the pot?

765 MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade! We are eating these beans. Since you have brooded over our fellow who has died, receive him.' For we do not pray to him who has died now, but to that first one who died first. If we do not give him beans then the beans dry up, they shrivel in the fields and people say: 'The shade is angry. We have made a mistake in not giving him beans, we have not taken care of our fellow, his child.' Because the shade creates the beans. Yes, he, the shade, creates all foods, millet and maize and all.

764 QUESTION: The stealing of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: The millet and beans used are those of the house, but the stem of bananas must come from the house of a friend because bananas belong to the shade. Do you pray to him in the hoed fields? In the millet? You pray to him in the banana grove! Because of this you seek another's banana stem!

764 QUESTION: Circling round the fire to the harp and singing?

765 MWASALEMBA: The first shade who has died we have within us, he has brooded over us, we make him circle round, we are with him.

[1] At the drinking of the beer of inheritance in the Ndali ritual the shades are called upon. 'If the beer froths up that means the shades have heard', and the calabash cup is dashed to pieces on the hearth.

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QUESTION: Where is the one who has just died?
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MWASALEMBA: It is him the shade has brooded over. We say: 'You shade, look after this child of yours, care for him and don't abandon him. He also should be a shade, let the others speak to him in the future.' When we sing 'Farewell . . .' we lament him who has died.

QUESTION: And the trampling dance (*ukukanya inganya*)?

MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade, care for your fellow, don't desert him, may he be with you in your body.' We trample the ground because the shade is in the ground, he is within the body, he is underground, everywhere.

QUESTION: What do you mean by 'in your body'?

MWASALEMBA: Because the shade has created us, we came from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.

QUESTION: The two leaves and beating and saying: '*Syeku, syeku of father, syeku, syeku of mother*'?

MWASALEMBA: Syeku is the name we have been given for the shade. We say: 'The shade, the shade of father, the shade, the shade of mother!' because since a woman has died we speak to the shade as if the husband was 'father' (*tate*) who brooded over his wife. He has brooded over all us living, both me and my wife. That is what these leaves are [i.e. the husband and wife]. We speak to that man who was first buried, saying: 'Perhaps you are within, perhaps you are beneath, oh shade!' We speak to that first man who was the first to die.

Sweeping the house is that it may be clean (*usuela*). Before that it is [783] dirty. . . .

The shade brooded both over the dead and over me, the living; he brooded over the dead who is with him and over me who am alive; I am in him—we all are. . . .

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QUESTION: Why the water on the roof?
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MWASALEMBA: If we neglect this then a child will go mad, he runs off to the water and the water comes into his nose [i.e. he drowns] because we have not given him water in the doorway of the little hut there. If we neglect something then the child goes mad and runs off and catches hold of faeces, he smears faeces on his body and urinates into his hands and washes with the urine.

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QUESTION: Why does the shade want him to do these filthy things?
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MWASAMELMA: Because if we do not perform the ritual for him and do not care for him we do not remember him, then he says: 'Since you do not remember me this child will also get dirty, because I have got dirty underground, I am dead. See, you buried me! The earth has entered my mouth and eyes, why do you not care for me?'

QUESTION: But even if you do treat him ritually, still the earth is in his mouth! How is he satisfied?

MWASALEMBA: Because this shadow (*ipungulu*) [pointing in explanation to the shadows of the banana trees] is what we care for, it is the

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775 764 shade (*jonyuka*)! That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWASALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWASALEMBA: It is with the banana that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet banana what we cut at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWASALEMBA: They throw it away on the litter.

QUESTION: Where?

MWASALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Here we have mourned; let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I throw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, not for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?

775 MWASALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWASALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse 768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has 171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*alinaje indumbula*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

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us in front, we men, and the woman is also roused. If you have not the shade in you (*ukanajo unyuka*)[1], then you are sterile, you are impotent, you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not rouse him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade rouses within a man and says: 'Ha!' It rouses a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not rouse him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

QUESTION: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

MWASALEMBA: The hair is very important, it's very important.

Mwasalemba identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

QUESTION: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (wife of Mwasalemba) told me that stones were placed between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, but also of a bride (*usungu*)[2] and that the stones are children (*amabwe bo bana*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power of the shades (*mmaka ga bayuka*).'

Mwasalemba himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

SYUNGU: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage-cattle.'

QUESTION: And madness?

SYUNGU: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases *ukanio kujo unyuka* (to be without the shade) and *unyuka ikumukutula* (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Usungu*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*ukusungu*).

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764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

[158]

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 587 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens. I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

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[1] Referring to the *ingonde* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

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764 QUESTION: Why the leaves and bananas?

KAKUNE: If you do not wear these and throw them away your own children [i.e. children of the participant] will die soon after birth; you beget a daughter and she dies, a son and he dies, then people say: 'See, you did not perform the ritual.' . . .

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the death ritual?

KAKUNE: Because the deceased has died on us (*atufwelile mumbeli*), if we do not treat him, he looks on us, we are together with him, he does not move away at all, so then, we drive him off.

He then described the acts of the ritual in great detail exactly checking what Mwaikambo and I saw when Kalata's mother died (cf. pp. 238–44) except that he did not mention grinding ointment [184] at the circling round. I asked about this and he thought it was not done in his lineage but was not sure.

QUESTION: The stones between the toes?

KAKUNE: It is to make a separation, it is our separation, we are driving him off; we go into the water with pebbles and throw them away, they are the deceased, we drive him off.

QUESTION: And what about running through the house letting the water drip on you after bathing?

KAKUNE: Yes, indeed, we come from the stream carrying water which we have drawn, and flowers in our hands, and we throw the flowers on the thatch.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

764 KAKUNE: It is because we have come from the stream, we have
● 775 driven him away in the stream, but we bring back water we have drawn and flowers—they are the deceased. It means we are with him for he has not moved (*akasama*); let us drive him out again. We throw away the flowers on the thatch and we pour water on the thatch and it trickles down on the body. It is he [the deceased] whom we receive. If we drive him away altogether at the water what will he say to us?

QUESTION: You receive him and drive him off again?

KAKUNE: We drive him off so that his whole body should not be [828] seen, because we fear to see the dead . . . and at the same time we do *not* drive him away, he will come in dreams to tell us of misdeeds (*ukutubula inongwa*).

When we receive him we drive him away again at the anointing with ointment. The doctor anoints us on the toe, knee, elbow, stomach, and forehead, and says: 'I have finished them, anoint yourselves.' Then we anoint ourselves and say: 'You have moved to another village.' But at the same time we do not throw him away altogether, we pray to him

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and say: 'You, Father, stand by me.' We bring him back when we have bathed. He also bathed there, he is present![1]

QUESTION: The meaning of the shaving?

KAKUNE: The doctor takes a bunch of *ikisajelo* grass and a little millet beer and then makes two cross lines in the hair before shaving, and he shaves us.

QUESTION: Why?

KAKUNE: It is the ritual, we drive him off.

Being unable to get any more I then suggested that the *ikisajelo* and beer represented the shade and that they took him on to their bodies in order to throw him off.

Kakune: 'Yes, that's it, you are very intelligent for you understand it! That's it!'

[824]

QUESTION: And is the *ikisajelo* grass the shade's which the seers uproot?

KAKUNE: Yes, we have heard that long ago there were three seers (*abakunguluka*), X and Y and Z [I missed the names], who went with two village headmen to look; one seer uprooted the *ikisajelo* grass to look beneath at the land of the shades and he called the village headmen to look. When they shrank back and said 'He!' he said it was a homestead such as those above.

QUESTION: Did this happen in the day-time?

KAKUNE: It happened in the day-time, in the open, not in a dream. But later on, when one village headman had gone he said: 'Let me look again.' He tried to uproot it but the *ikisajelo* grass was stuck, it would not come up. But all that happened a long time ago; seers are not seen nowadays. And when we have finished everything, at the time of destroying the ritual house, the doctor touches us all with the razor, that is the tuft (*itemelo*).

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QUESTION: Is this before the beer of inheritance?

KAKUNE: Yes, before the beer, on the day of bathing. It means that letting the 'hair of the corpse' grow is finished, we have finished. You may drink freely. And have we written about the roasted chicken and the bananas?[2]

G. W.: No.

KAKUNE: What? No? But we all eat these with our fellow villagers—and a bull if we have killed one, for we kill a bull if we have it—at the bathing in the stream. And in the evening the doctor prepares the

[1] The statement above was not made quite so straightforwardly as it is written down; at certain points Kakune stopped and I prompted him either with: 'And then?' or 'What does that mean?' There were no leading questions and I took down his words exactly.

[2] Our best informants often asked whether what they told us was properly recorded.

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The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ubukamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikikolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*unkamu gwangu*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*nkamu gwangu*)." '

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives." ' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born." ' Mwakionde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water." ' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is

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585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the litter the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakionde, the doctor, explained:

[843] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *mindu*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukona ililopa lya nombe ko kwiputa*).

Mwakobela, our neighbour, said:

If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*bikundoga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ija mmapa* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

842 775 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *come out a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwaisilage explained this conception:

Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*kisyukege ikikolo kila*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

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Mwakanjoki and his fellows, said that Lwembe is there (in the belly), they did not speak of Kyala. Did you not hear at Lubaga?[1] What did I ask for?

G. W.: You asked for a child!

KASITILE: Yes, I asked for a child. The menstrual blood is that which we discharge when lying together. I, the man, discharge, and the woman also discharges. If Kyala does not support us, then that blood degenerates, it becomes blood which flows out at the period.

G. W.: But the girl has periods before intercourse?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, that is her blood. Does a woman not discharge? If she sleeps alone, as a bachelor, her blood just flows out, it does not create a child. In intercourse we try to discharge together. If I see that the woman is gasping I try to discharge with her. If I am gasping and wish to discharge, I wait for the woman. Yes, there is choice. We are all like that. But our fathers feared that if the woman discharges first she will bear a girl, and if I, the man, discharge first she will bear a boy! The shades of her fathers are there in the body of a girl, and we drive them away. It is like the case of a widow; the situations are just alike. We treat the girl and say: 'Now the woman is free.' At the eating of the bull we seem to say: 'You shade, be present and look upon us. This meat is for you to go away a little. May she bear children.'

G. W.: So if the shade is in the girl she cannot bear children?

KASITILE: What can the shade go away with if you do not pray?

QUESTION: What happens if she washes and performs all the ritual with a man, a husband, and then leaves him, without having had full intercourse, for another man?

KASITILE: It does not matter. She is freed from the lineage of her father, she has moved to another lineage, so they do not treat her again. (*Sika mbombo, abwike nkikolo kya gwise, asamile nkikolo ikingi, popapo batikuntendekesya kangi.*)

On another occasion Kasitile said that intercourse took place 'when Kyala and the shades have gathered there. They come out in the woman and her belly sprouts [i.e. she conceives].'

Kasitile was not offering a personal interpretation when he talked about conception. Conversation with a number of people showed that the ideas he put forward were generally held. Mwandisi, the old blind chief, when asked where the blood to beget children came from, replied:

It is from him who makes us all do things, Kyala and the shades together.

[1] Rituals are performed on behalf of the country at Lubaga. Kasitile was a hereditary priest. See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (forthcoming).

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841 QUESTION: And menses?
●775 MWANDISI: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly menstruating and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

833 And on another occasion he said:
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775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned *both* Kyala (or Lwembe) *and* the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakionde, after [843] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

KAKUJU: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

QUESTION: If the husband asked for her properly and deflowered her before puberty?

KAKUJU: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

842 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and
775 this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[881] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*ulufumbo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

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have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up." ' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalaga* or *ilibuko* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhœa. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhœa. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhœa comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

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MUNGASALWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujegejala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukusumbulila* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult. [863]

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris. [831]

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Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Porokoto's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body." '

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QUESTION: In the puberty ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

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QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

MWASALEMBA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN1
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881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?

● 775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikobatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
839 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?

771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775
833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

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rouse him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhœa and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhœa which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhœa for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness?

MWASALEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*umwafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come from?

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection.

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

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833
●775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

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585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingotolo* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approach-
784 ing her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibuko* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

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837 QUESTION: The spirits are angry?
753 MWANDISI: Yes, they say: 'That woman for whom we gave marriage-
●775 cattle has overstepped her husband.' Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

842 Kakune, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband
837 when his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another
753 man entering her.

If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhœa; in the old days we fell in war.

QUESTION: What if the adulterer practises *coitus interruptus*?

KAKUNE: Yes, if the man is clean he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the veld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: 'Ha! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are soiled by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhœa, I do not suffer from it.

837 The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa,
684 is that of a man with his father's wife. Angombwike explained:

If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the
[783] wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and treated there. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cows meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a
[783] distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a waterfall and treated him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

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behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipiki* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhœa'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kukutilyasa kuso, kukukilasya kuso*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipiki* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipiki* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipiki* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!" '

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulukuvga*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abanyago*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imisoka*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imisoka* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imisoka* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

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ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother protested at the inclusion of the cactus stems and it is likely that they were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery.

*(d) Prayer to the shades*

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior relatives, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kinsman the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me!" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is sterile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tata*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given me cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*jo mpala gwenge*)[1] for cattle are important (*imbala*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angombwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelebeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*batata*), and prayers are addressed primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the

[1] Literally, 'he is my great one'.

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man. Women murmur but it only makes them sick themselves [laughter]. But my father's sister (*amasumpi*) can murmur, she is a man like my father. . . . If my mother is old and I do not care for her she will murmur and fall sick herself, she will never make me sick. My mother is no relative in my homestead, she is no relative to the shades.

However, Mwakwelebeja (a very old and conservative man) held that 'People sometimes say: "My mother beneath is angry" though it's not common', and Kaitile was quite positive that a mother was also a shade with power to inflict misfortune, as the following conversation shows:

QUARROW: What shades influence a man or woman?

KAITILE AND HIS YOUNGEST WIFE: *Imisoka* of father is there, and *imisoka* of mother. Yes, indeed, *imisoka* of mother exists. Once I had not put beer in the house and I fell ill. The divination said: 'It is *imisoka* of your mother. She is angry not to find anything in your house.' Because we chiefs always put beer in a little calabash in the house, it stays there always.

QUARROW: When it goes bad?

KAITILE: We put some more. There is a little millet flour there now. Sometimes we put flour, sometimes beer. And when I come to die they bury beer with me. . . . Once the offering was not there, and my mother who was dead came to look and did not find anything. Then she went to father, who was dead, and said: 'I went to our child. His house was without anything.' Then father said: 'Let us go and look!' They did not find anything, then they shook me up. Then the oracle said: 'It is the *imisoka* of your mother.'

QUARROW: And a wife?

KAITILE: Both her father and her mother punish [lit. hit] her at their place, even though she is with me, also they punish her.

QUARROW: But your shades?

KAITILE: How can they punish in-laws? They do not punish her, but the child whom she has borne, their grandchild, him they punish.

Though Kaitile and others denied that the husband's shades could punish a wife, nevertheless she suffers from their anger through the child, through a difficult labour, or through the beer she brews going bad.

PEACHAMO: It is said that when a woman who has quarrelled with her husband is brewing beer and it goes bad, that means the shades are angry. The shades of the husband have made the beer go bad. The husband has murmured and the shades have heard. When a wife is pregnant it is taboo for her to quarrel with her husband; she will have a difficult labour. The husband murmurs and the shades hear. The

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difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult labour her husband does pray to his shades.

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *imisoka*, affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *imisoka*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *imisoka* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The *junior* begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ukupindi*) and blowing it out (*ukuiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwalusumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuuma* means both 'to

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783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and *ukwiputa* (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Full confessions both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the misfortune.

● 775 783 613 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support. 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grandfather) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they should afflict the living. *Ukwikemeya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame', from the root *ukukemela* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding, troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 782 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house, which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ikijinja kyaka ikikemo*). If an animal is sacrified the blood must soak into the earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ija mmapa* meat from the foreleg of the beast[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*bakanila abakemmana*)'.

783 613 The proper person to approach the shades is (among commoners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

[171]

[1] The cut is the same as the Xhosa *isinqumo* which is sacred in a Pondo sacrifice. cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 249. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Nguni and Nuer.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, drinking the sacrificial beer.

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(forty miles away), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 613
knows the shades (*apimanye imisoka*) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it rouses the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock." ' A wife also avoids bananas from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grave; she must stay silent and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwaisumo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 775

MWAISUMO: Our regular custom here, when a child is ill with sores on the mouth from *imisoka*, is to pray to the shades (*ukwipata kubayuke*), especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells [781] me: 'It is *imisoka*, your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain (*ukwijijo*) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.'

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup (*ulupindi*), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'You, Father, you so-and-so, you so-and-so, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have nourished the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover. Stand by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have stinted a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

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764 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kaitile
578 was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do
783 you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kaitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*idete*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(*c*) *Reconciliation*

828 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due
783 to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

578 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur
783 against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Mature men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they *admit their anger* and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ukwijeja*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' They drink beer and eat meat saying: 'We are not angry now.' Those who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ukwijeja* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ukwipaula*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

578 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on *either* shades *or*
●775 neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to
783 murmur' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify *both* the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 98–108.

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAIKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father and his body becomes like goose flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, asking that I forgive him and saying: "I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought", and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ulanje*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

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pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers.

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu iyo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*ankamu*) to her husband.

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him.

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his

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796 fication both with corpse and shade. In other rituals the identification is with the shade alone, but still the participant is felt to be filthy and close to madness. The symbols of purification are
796 many: clearing and burning the litter, burning the clothes or
783 leaves worn during the seclusion, elaborate and repeated washing and shaving, and anointing the body with rouge and oil. One aspect of purification is the driving away of the 'filthy' shade symbolized first by throwing away pebbles or a stem of bananas into a running stream; and, secondly, by casting seeds into a pot which is put on the fire, grinding millet in the doorway and letting it fall on bark-cloth, putting various parts of the body on the fire symbolically and grinding them symbolically, passing a winnowing basket of millet between the legs, scattering millet, and dancing the trampling dance. The second group of symbols all represent sexual intercourse. Seed or grain is identified with semen, fire with intercourse, bark-cloth and the round winnowing basket—a woman's basket *par excellence*—represent the woman, and putting seeds on the fire, grinding, passing the basket of millet between the legs, and probably also the trampling dance[1] represent the sex act. The shade is thought to be ejected from the body as semen, and therefore intercourse is a means of driving the shade from the body.

796 An element of the death ritual is the separation of corpse and
●775 spirit, the final disposal of the corpse, and the bringing of the new shade back 'to warm himself with the other shades' at the family hearth: he is received as the water which drips from the doorway of the hut, and welcomed to the hearth with music; but the distinction between the corpse which is got rid of and the shade which is welcomed is not maintained systematically. Repeatedly our informants spoke of the shade (*ukuyuka*) being driven away from dreams and waking thought, and from men's bodies, as well as being separated from the corpse. The aim of Nyakyusa ritual is not that union with God constantly sought in Christian ritual, but a separation both from the shades and the heroes; for close association with the pagan gods spells madness and death, not fullness of life. A measure of separation from the shades is a condition of fertility as well as of sanity. Intercourse cannot be fruitful until the shades of her father's lineage have 'moved aside a little' from the nubile girl, the shade of a deceased husband from his widow.

[1] The actions of the trampling dance and the contexts in which it occurs at death and puberty suggest this, but such an interpretation was not explicitly given.

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We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we *are* the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents *both* death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gasping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants.

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ikipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of

[1] *cf.* Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 232.

[2] *cf.* Bhaca, *idloti*: shade, semen (W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idloti*: semen virile (A. Kropf, *Kaffir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idloti*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilakazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*).

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the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first, those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are planted at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the root at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: *'ilikemo*[2] *lyabatata*

[1] We did not see this at the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilikemo*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief; *ipilemo*: sacrificial meat; *ilikemo*: Holy Communion (modern usage).

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*kijenja, ko bikwiputa*, the sacred place of the fathers is the banana grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine, interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstruating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ikipiki* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *unyuka*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the one beneath', *ugwa pasi*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imindu* (sing. *ilindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubunyali*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with physiological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Ukunyuka*: to rise from the dead. For the noun the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imiyuka* rather than *abayuka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *imindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

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829 rituals: 'they are customary' (*lulwiho*), 'they come to us from long ago', 'our fathers and grandfathers performed them'; and established in the nature of the universe: 'Kyala made us black people like that.'

(*b*) *The nature of the shades*

775 613 The nature of the shades is revealed in Nyakyusa rituals, and we are now in a position to summarize their attributes.

The shades, 'those who have risen from the dead', are the dead members of a lineage and, unless they were ruling chiefs when alive, they have power only over their own kinsmen, and are concerned only with behaviour between members of the lineage, not with behaviour towards outsiders. As we have seen, the shades of her father's lineage 'move aside a little' from a woman when marriage-cattle and the bull of puberty have been given for her but, if these are still owing, it is thought that her child as well as she herself may be made ill by her father's shades. Membership of a lineage is determined by the passage of marriage-cattle: a child belongs to the group which provided cattle for its mother. Therefore, it is argued, the shades of the lineage which provided the cattle, and they alone, if the payment has been made in full, have power over children. If no cattle have been given the child is in the power of the mother's shades. But there are difficulties over the *ikipiki* medicine, for only that of the genitor's lineage can safely be used, and its use implies membership of the lineage that provides it. There is a further idea that shades only have power over those living in a homestead of their lineage. 'A child is never made ill by the mother's shades when it is in the father's homestead, only when it is with its mother's people.'

775 The dead dwell beneath (*pasi*), in 'the land of the shades' (*kubapuka*), which is a shadowy reflection of the land of the living, with homesteads and gardens, wives and cattle, villages and chiefdoms.

MWAIKAMBO: People think that in the land of the shades they build homes like we do, they marry wives, they have children, they plant food and build houses. I heard this always from old men, but they only guess. They say: 'Perhaps it is nice, perhaps horrible.' They do not know very much. They fear to die. I have never met any old pagan man who wanted to die, they always fear. Property is important: People are much taken up with the idea that riches are there in the land of the shades. They say: 'If a man dies his fathers come to receive

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him, but if they find he has no cows with him they are angry, they do not receive him with rejoicing. If they do not kill some cattle at the burial of a dead man without doubt illness will come to the home. I they consult an oracle then the oracle says: 'Your fathers beneath are angry because you did not kill cattle for the burial of So-and-so.' So then they go and kill a beast. When they kill cattle at a death they do not kill for the mourners to eat, no, but they say it is that the fathers may receive him well, that they may not be angry. 775●

The shades manifest themselves to the living in dreams or as snakes, and they come by night to the homestead to eat food set aside for them in the sacred grove or the senior wife's hut.

Whenever food is cooked a little is left for the shades. It is said that the shades come by night to eat the food. Some people say that they have seen the shades when they come to warm themselves by the fire in the house. If the fire of the shades blazes up, and I look, it is extinguished immediately, and if someone turns round the hut is quite dark. People eat the food which they put for the shades, they do not throw it away. Sometimes, if the food rots, they say it is because the shades have eaten from it. People say that if they do not put aside food the shades will take away the fertility of the fields and we will not have much food.

The hearth is a shrine: the food and beer are left overnight beside the hearth or on the hearth-bricks. Every good housewife has a log of firewood which she keeps by her all her life: she takes it with her when she moves and it is burnt at her funeral. 'It is the shades'. The shades [of her husband] pick bits from it when they want to warm themselves at the fire.' And the wife herself must keep out of the way: 'Some men refuse to let their wives sleep near the fire at night, saying: "You will drive away the shades." ' 775 778

The association of a small grove of bananas in each homestead with the shades has already been stressed. There meat and beer offered in sacrifice are left. There is also a connection, most obvious among chiefs, but occurring among commoners also, between the shade and a chosen tree. In Ngonde Mwenefumbo said:

The fathers prayed at the grove of their father. If a man moved he took *ilindi*, a branch of the tree at the grove, and carried it to his new home and there put it in a tree he had chosen, saying: 'Now you have arrived, father.' He poured out beer and flour there and invoked all his fathers and grandfathers and ancestors, saying: 'May I sleep! Gather and eat these things! May the children sleep.' Then he blew out water and finished. 775 778 166

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775 764 Among the Nyakyusa men spoke often of the obligation of the heir to keep the grave of his father swept and tended. Graves are in the open courtyard of the homestead and the meticulous weeding and sweeping of this space by the owner and his young sons is thus an act of piety, as well as a means of achieving 'dignity' in the homestead.[1]

775 The shades are also identified with the earth—'the earth *is* the shades (*umfu bo basyuka*)'—and offerings to them are buried, or laid upon, or poured out on it. To say 'the earth is angry' means: 'the shade is angry.' Stories are told of prophets (*abasololi*) who have descended to the land of the shades and returned, and of others who have seen men in the land of the shades while they are yet alive. That is a sure sign of their future death, though it may be delayed. And there are tales of those who have seen the dead with the cattle killed at his funeral. 'We say those are the shadows (*imisyungulu*) which go to the land of the shades.'

A soft, tufty grass, used as bedding for cattle, is called 'blessed' (*ikisajelo*) and is known as 'the doorway of the shades' (*ikifigo kya basyuka*). The tale of three prophets who uprooted a tuft of it and saw the land of the shades beneath has already been related (p. 77).

ANGOMBWIKE: As a child at my grandfather's I heard that the water from the blessed grass reaches the land of the shades, and that if the shades wish to come to our place they stand there in the blessed grass and where they have stood there is no dew. Indeed, there is never dew on the blessed grass.

At this point in the conversation one of us went to examine the blessed grass and called back: 'But there is dew on it.' Another man who was listening broke in indignantly: 'Is there much dew? There is very little!' and, indeed, there was less than on other types of grass.

But though the shades dwell beneath and visit the homesteads of their kinsmen seeking food and warmth, they are also *within* men—*munda* (in the belly)—they create desire, they control conception, and are ejected in intercourse as semen. 'If you have not got a shade you are impotent, sterile, you do not go to women.'

The shades delight in cattle, and though they demand certain sacrifices they are unwilling that cattle of the lineage should die unnecessarily. Mwakwelebeja told us:

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 77.

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My bull was wounded. When I tried to kill it, it troubled me, it did not die. I took a banana sapling and chewed it and prayed to my fathers, saying: 'This bull has been wounded because it was destroying people's crops. I am killing it because the people are angry with me and they might spear me in the night if I don't kill it.' My son struck it the third time, then it bellowed and I said: 'Yes, they have heard my prayer,' and it fell down and died. The shades were preventing it dying because they liked it to be alive. The whole country liked this bull because of its beautiful bellowing.

The shades are very real to an old man like Mwakwelebeja:

We live with the shades, constantly the fathers come to us, and also a wife who has died. The shades rise and come to us. In the morning I wake up and tell my wife the shades came to me, I slept with them, and with the wife who has died.

QUESTION: Why do they come?

MWAKWELEBEJA: You just dream. Sometimes they speak something, and in the morning I tell my wife they said so-and-so. Sometimes they bring food. If a sick man dreams that he eats their food he will die. If he dreams that he visits them and they drive him away he will recover. Sometimes I dream of my father or of my mother, sometimes of the villagers, So-and-so, and So-and-so. Yes, we fear to dream of the shades, even if we don't eat food. We fear that if they come often we will follow them.

And even to young men like Kititu they seem near:

Yes, the shades come to us in dreams at night. Perhaps I dream of my father who has died, he appears, he gives me a cow, I wonder, it seems that I have gained that cow. I rejoice and am glad. This is all in a dream. Perhaps my mother has died and I dream of her. She gives me food as it were on this table. I eat, I drink beer with her. Our grandfathers used to dream of war. When the Ngoni were in the country they would dream that they and the shades, the fathers who had died, were fighting with the Ngoni; in the dream they would spear them and the blood would appear. All men dream, but those whose dreams come true we call *abasololi*—prophets. These men sometimes dream of public matters, as well as private, they go to Kasitile [the priest] and say: 'Hunger is coming, carry out the ritual in the sacred grove.' Then they take a cow, bananas, and milk to the sacred grove as Kasitile says. Then there are those who fall into a fit and the friends of such a man go to Kasitile and tell what he said.

Perhaps I dream of my father or grandfather, and he comes and gives me food. I know him by his appearance in the dream. Perhaps my grandfather died while I was still a child, but I know him by his dress

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775 828 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.' 775 828 177 But in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers fear such dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

QUESTION: And now?

KITITU: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 QUESTION: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

KITITU: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 828 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:

If I speak of the recently dead others will say: 'Don't speak of them, they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

And the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

673 753 777 (*c*) *Belief and behaviour*

In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link between misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kititu's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

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[585] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive 834 activities of successive generations.

> If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

•775 673 578 681 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour commonly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quarrels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 775 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune have already been quoted (pp. 134–5; 187–8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

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find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwanga*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 764 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 681 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 771 688 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kinsmen or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 103-6.

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'*Tutigona* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angry. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text:

I began by learning the word or name: *mipasa*, and to know that the shade (*mipasa*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imiyenguli*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*mwiye*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*ubuniye*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [*sic*] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: '*Mfinda*, the shades have created them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fire-bricks and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illnesses among my parents and stories of my elders.

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577 777 534 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulungile*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*kwimanwaliye, kwesiyepe*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwainumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*akali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

631 ●775 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*agulyfu*) shade.'

754 673 621 Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about the danger of neglecting rituals and angering *senior* relatives, living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 621 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after another that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angambwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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food, beer, and other things placed at the graves, are intended to maintain in some way the life of the spirits, to keep them in countenance in their own world. For as men are dependent on the goodwill of the spirits for the best things of life, so do the spirits depend upon their descendants on earth for much of what they require in the other world.

The dead are conceived as obtaining a great access of power on passing into the spirit world, power for good or evil, and to placate them is one of the chief preoccupations of Konde life. But while it would not be true to say that compulsion can be brought to bear upon the spirits, that once the appropriate ceremonies are performed, the spirit must fulfil the prayer of the petitioners, yet so complete is the faith of the common man in the power of these ceremonies, that it may be suggested that prayer and answer are inseparably bound up together; if compulsion is too strong a word, obligation, if milder, is perhaps sufficient.

The spirits are called *kanyuka*. The verb *kanyuka* means to *rise* from the dead, to resume ordinary bodily activities; but the noun formed from this verb, *unyuka* (of which the plural is *kanyuka*), means the inner man, the life of which is independent of the body. Now when the *unyuka* leaves the body, it does not *die*, it goes to *ulunyuka*, the land of spirits, where in all respects except that of having a body, it retains its humanity. The spirits are not, however, called *alunde* men; though the related term *munde*, which, applied to living men, is an insult, is often

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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• 715 given to them. There is no conception more firmly fixed in the Konde mins than that "the dead do not return"; they do not resume earthly life in bodily form; though they do return in spirit form, and sometimes exert themselves very energetically. The dead are with God: this is a conviction so universal that it cannot be the result of Christian teaching. And God is not above, as in our cosmology, but below. "*Kwawanya kuno malabanya*," is a frequent expression on the lips of some people. *Kwirabanya* means to be idle when one might be working; and the meaning of the phrase is that man's permanent home is not "above" on earth, but "below," very much as in the statement of St. Paul, "our citizenship is in heaven."

744 At death, or rather at burial, the head of the family, calling for silence from the wailing women, addresses the spirits by name, praying them to receive their friend. Then addressing the dead man directly, he says:

> "And you, friend, go to the land of spirits. Go in peace. Go to meet all whom we have named. They will recognize you. Salute them all. Tell them that we are paying taxes, that those men are an affliction to us. It was not we who killed you. Nay, we weep for your death."

The words, "these men are affliction to us," refer to the Europeans, and are still in use, though of recent years they have been gradually dropping out of the valedictory address at the grave. Another expression

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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still sometimes used, is "God will judge between us and the white man," a clear indication that the white man is not received everywhere as an unmixed blessing. 764

The entrance to the spirit world is the grave; and all that is done there is intended to give the dead man a favourable entrance upon his new state; well dressed, well supplied with all the necessaries of life; for he goes to God. The conditions of life below are the same as those above. The chief is a chief still, and the slave a slave. The rich man continues to be rich, and the poor goes on in his poverty. The wife goes to her husband, children to their parents. There is no retribution, no righting of wrongs. The judgment of God against the white man will be manifested here on earth, not in the future state. The unmarried man remains unmarried, and his body is smeared with charcoal, so that he may not, on arrival, be mistaken for a married man. Cattle are there, but they need no tending; bananas, but they require no cultivation. There is bush for the hunter, and streams for the fisher. But everything is small: cattle, houses, crops, even the spirits themselves, are *sekese*, thin, unsubstantial. 764 775

Prior to the arrival of the first human spirits, the place was inhabited by the owners of the land; and "these are they who see God, for God is a Spirit." Therefore human beings going there are strangers, but are well received, and given all necessaries, including land. 775 776

Although the dwelling of the spirits is below, they 775

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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•715 are by no means confined to that region, but come up frequently, especially at night, when they sit on the graves and chat, or go to the houses of their descendants seeking food or beer, and to assure themselves that there is still a "fire" there, and fire means descendants. In the house they make a noise, *hu, hu, hu*, heard by the people within, and morning reveals soiled food and beer grown thick, evidence that cannot be gainsaid of a spirit-visitor. Spirits are sometimes visible, but if addressed by name they will disappear. They cannot be seen in bright moonlight, and fire renders them invisible: a fireless house at night is still a terror to little children. A visit from a spirit is most unwelcome, especially to women and children, though the men claim that they are not afraid. Specially terrifying is a recently dead person who has been buried near the house. "*Panirya panja*" (there is terror outside) they say on a dark night, for the spirit of the dead man may be sitting on the mound which marks his grave. No one willingly passes the grave of a dead chief at night, for one may hear his name called: then woe to the man who looks behind, for he will die; or if he hears his name, but has the will not to look, some lesser evil will overtake him.

Wood noises in a wind, the moaning of the trees, is the voice of a spirit in the tree. If a branch snaps, and the passer-by looks round, evil will come; and if his name is called it is a sign that "his number is up," he has not long to live. But it may happen that the snapping of the branch is quite harmless, being

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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merely intended to make him look round, so that the spirit may get a good view of him, and see if he is his "child." 775

The spirits return to earth for many reasons, but chiefly for two. The first is to assure themselves that they still have descendants on earth; for if the family dies out it is a dreadful calamity for the ghosts: they become frogs. The second reason is to make sure that they are not forgotten by the living, for the spirit to whom no attention is paid by the living becomes of no account in the underworld. Hence the illness or other misfortune which overtakes the living; stern reminder of duty to the dead, who will not permit neglect.

By night the spirits, when they are visible at all, take human form; but by day they come in the form of birds, serpents, lions; and they come as small red or black ants to eat the flesh offered in sacrifice at the grave of a chief. When the spirit takes the form of a serpent, he is testing the loyalty of his descendants: if they try to kill him, it is a bad sign; they ought to know who he is, for such "accepted" snakes never bite anyone. Only chiefs enter into lions, going about to see how the people are behaving. God Himself also comes in this form, and for the same reason; and the lion, like the serpent, is harmless. The idea, common in some parts of Bantu Africa, that a child who resembles his dead grandfather is that grandfather come back to life, is scoffed at by the Konde. The child is like his grandfather, and that is all.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

# Divination & the Lot

THE fact of death is not regarded by the tribes of Central Africa as forming a barrier between the living and the dead. The two form one community, and the means of communication between them are naturally therefore well developed. Living and dead are mutually dependent, and a certain amount of goodwill must necessarily exist between them. What the dead cannot do for themselves, the living must do for them; and what the living must know, but do not, the dead can tell them if properly interrogated. It is upon this fact that divination depends, as do omens also to some extent. The use of charms and amulets, however, depends upon the other, and perhaps closely related fact, that Nature is not a fixed system of laws pursuing its way regardless of human needs, but is pliable, responsive, and will advise, protect, injure, according to the means used by those who possess the power.

The idea that the whole system of consultation of the spirits, of the interpretation of omens, and of the use of charms and amulets, is based upon conscious deception—a few clever men in each community

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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which killed the man passing over to those present at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups. The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to cut him off from all connection with earthly matters. His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his wives build themselves huts in which they live for a year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man"; after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.) The dead man has been dissociated from the living: the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off the dead man from the living, that by destroying his goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another member of the family will die soon. The most effective way of despatching him to his proper abode is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second death in the family is due to the reluctance of the first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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# CHAPTER III

## THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

### (a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*abe-nye-fyala*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1]

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is *ale* used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwaka* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwaka* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*anyuka ju kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuerer for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyala* in fact come from the same root. *Fyala* in Hehe means the daughter of a child (A. C. O. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mdonga District', *J.R.A.I.*, lxi (1931), p. 491). In Bena *nyafyare* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 136). In Ganda *nafyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 24). cf. Hehe, *fala* 'to forget, to leave' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Kisuaheli-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Spencer, 1882).

[2] cf. P. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Africa*, New Series, 1950, vol. 3, p. 68.

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769 643 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening, while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they [775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ifijigo*), this (*fingila*, might always remain above.

[776] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

643 While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example, [784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must calubit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but [842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he [761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

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thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili simindi ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tatikuongala kanono*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

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each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.' 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there be much food, may milk be plentiful.' There follows a communion in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred meat and beer. 'The shades eat together, they break off firewood there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will make this clearer.

### (i) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

In July 1935, two days after the Kinga had sacrificed at Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 30), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwaijonga (81). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaijonga's second senior headman and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

> Kasitile (86) summoned us some time ago. He and Njobokwa and Kinegesa[1] and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and Kasitile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice. Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasitile and then kill it in Mwaijonga's grove.

Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasitile told us

> Mwambene (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (10 July 1935) Godfrey Wilson went to Kasitile's homestead just after sunset. Kasitile took a calabash cup hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

[1] Sister of two other village headmen of Mwaijonga, also priests of his grave.

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Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakalule (117), Mwakomo (116). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this. 769 782

NGELYO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.

KAMONDYA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.' [262]

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*vide* plate 8). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chief, two to the commoners, the chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngelyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Seba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngelyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained: [262]

We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper foreleg (*ipamupa*), this is the sacred meat, the one we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!' [175]

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked: [278]

[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet porridge as very distasteful and eat it only during extreme scarcity.

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a first fruit was taken fruit to the grave.

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it was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As they drank they prayed: 769 782

Oh thou Ifwakaglle (59) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

The shade come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . hen the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775] [778]

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX. [578]

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# CHAPTER VII

## CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 776 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujola ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujola ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a [178] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness 783 to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is [778] lighted. The phrase *ukujola ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ukufumbe*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[759] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

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the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafigo mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

### (a) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 119-13.

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787 of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (30 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This ● [795] ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen 783 who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? 796 Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners *in this situation* do not pray, *only the chief.*

POROKOTO: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
MWAMUNDA: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*tujelele*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwasalemba, also spoke.

[1] Porokoto was already sceptical of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

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783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed
thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]
[753] MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?
MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

[778] Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

[755] Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] [753] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry ...' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

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away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo nisala talinagwe kwila mumbi, mutalaka je jeje, nalinaga nyfwile ndinagwe—unyfu ugu gutijinaga nakomo je jeje—papo longa ndamila nikuti 'unyuka akalele unyfu ugu' bo fainile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one.

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again.

This interpretation by Mwaalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and unity. The fact that blowing out water is also a symbol of confession—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwaalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men

[1] *Cf.* I. Cunnison, 'Kinship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 5–23; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. [illegible]; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 46, 88–89.

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and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mkamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . . Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confirm their anger and pray: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

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began to prepare my rain, and made the country good. Food started to be plentiful. Why should I be treated thus? I asked. And the shades and Kyala heard me, so it rained *heavily* (too much). Do I grow angry by my own power? I do, and I put the rain stones in water, and when Kyala hears me then it rains too much, my anger has results; but if Kyala does not agree then, when I go the next day to the grove, I find there is no water in the potsherd. . . . I work by Kyala's power; when water is in the sherd I know it is he who has helped me. . . . We don't do it ourselves, it rains if the shades and Kyala help us. I cannot say that I do things alone without their help, it is they who give me breath (*indope*) and when they help I feel the power, the rain will fall very heavily. . . .

The way in which the weather was connected by the people of Selya with Kaitile is illustrated by the following entry in Godfrey Wilson's note-book:

Mwaipopo the chief had omitted to tell Kaitile formally that their kinsman, Mwaikyambe, had died. Kaitile had come to the funeral in the morning, and gone off in a huff saying, 'They did not tell me.' Mwaipopo then sent Ngulyo (the priest) after him with 1s. to pacify him. 'Yes, he paid because he had wronged his father.' Kaitile accepted the 1s. and came back. There had been rain during the night, but the early morning was fine. About 11 a.m. it began to rain, softly at first and then hard. I was in Mwaipopo's house drinking beer. They discussed the rain, hinting that it was caused by Kaitile. 'That Kaitile' was the most direct hint I heard. But they discussed the fact that 'this morning it was raining at Kaitile's,' i.e. that the rain began there and spread over the country. The rain was coming from that direction, it was true, but the morning at Kaitile's had been fine. Ngulyo said, 'When I got to Kaitile's place there was rain.' Suddenly there was a hush and someone whispered: 'Ssh! He is at the door, he is coming in', and Kaitile came in. Mwaipopo apologized again, through Ngulyo, for having omitted to call him: 'I had just got back from Tukuyu, I was surprised that no one had told you, Mwakisambwe (identifying Kaitile with his great-grandfather *qv*). You too, Ngulyo and Kisegera, are at fault, you should have told him. When I got to the funeral this morning and was told that Mwakisambwe had gone away again saying no one had told him then I sent you to tell him.' All this was said in a rather plaintive voice to Ngulyo, Kaitile being next Ngulyo. Kaitile said nothing. At noon, when we got up and went out, the rain had lessened, and it stopped almost at once. On my way back from the funeral later, I heard one of the young men, a son of Mwaipopo, who was with me, say to the other: 'Kaitile has forgiven, but only partially, the rain has spoilt the ritual.' About 1 p.m. the

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. . . I put the stones into water, it is as if someone spilt it out, the cloud dries up. . . . Now Kyala has gone away, the shades have fled, formerly they clapped their hands (indicating satisfaction). . . . There is something about which the shade is angry, because in this homestead we were accustomed to pray frequently. . . . If I boast saying: 'It will rain tomorrow', will it rain?
MWAKASENDA THE WISEMAN (gravely, and with hesitation): No, not if Kyala does not wish.
WIFE OF MWAKASENDA: But formerly it agreed [i.e. the rain came].

A day or two later Kasitile came in, during the evening, with Mwalumanye, a young doctor, the son of doctors.

K.: This rain, do you not ask about it?
G.W.: Have you been to consult the oracle?
K.: Yes, I consulted it the day before yesterday.
G.W.: What did it say?
K.: It said: 'Your fathers are angry, and Kyala and the Holy Spirit (Mulungu Mushimu)!'
G.W.: What do they say we have done wrong?
K.: Since Mwaipopo received a Court what have the chiefs given us to say 'We did wrong?' Did they give me a cow? They did not. [Here Kasitile was referring to the insult to Lubaga, *vide supra*, pp. 33-4, and he identifies himself with the priests of Lubaga.] In Mulilyambe I was a commoner, I ate meat, here I live hungry.
G.W.: And now who will speak out about this matter?
K.: You, you tell Mwaipopo 'Ask Pikentalaba (Kasitile III) why this rain does not come, what has happened to it?'
G.W. refused and asked: Who should suggest this according to custom?
K.: Mwamulonda.
MWAKASENDA: Because according to custom, Mwaipopo (G.W.), if things were as they are with us now, if the rain refused, our fathers came to Kasitile (Ist), the father of this one, to ask him saying, 'Kasitile what has happened to the rain?' But now that our fathers are dead, we are lost, we do not ask.

And a few days later the chief said: 'We have thrown away our food, it's drying up in the ground . . . this drought! Kasitile says: "It has delivered me . . . the shades (misimi) have caught hold of us." Perhaps they claim a cow, perhaps it is because Mwalinje (1918) and his fellows paid here. . . . But those beneath are angry (pointing downwards and speaking with conviction), the owner is angry.

The rain-maker therefore is not conceived of as working independently; the goodwill of the shades of the chief is necessary, and perhaps also those of the rain-maker himself, though this is not quite clear. Nowadays, at least, Kyala is also invoked. In

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[769] drought, as in illness, a number of possible causes are discus
[770] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persi
[771] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can t
this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his cli
as the following case shows.

[789] In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concern
[791] only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1933
with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated ma
gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to
[821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwasibi, who had first boasted that
could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by
chief, Mwakalukwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much g
by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'.
was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given
sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torren
rain), Mwakalukwa's son Mwakinisile (170, for Mwakaluk
himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

[576] 'Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went ho
thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and
met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakabululo (178),
said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakinisile has given m
bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I
angry.' Then Mwakabululo heard and sent a message to say he wo
provide a cow, since Mwakalukwa was dead. But the doctor refus
'No, Mwakalukwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.'
following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there
rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakinisile (170) refused to
him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected
and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and s
'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it
rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much
'Taboyo to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!'

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—anot
reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Beja in
country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a
stone into the Lake.

### (F) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

[787] We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the homestead

[1] There is a particular rain said to fall in the dark of the Lake. In 1933 the Lake ro
was confusing to what had been the usual one of the District Commissioner's
at Kyimbila.

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younger one' gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions].

Kasitile spoke of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported:

> Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the hoes. I paid him 1s. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amango*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyondo's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine on the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country.

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. There he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again.

> He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the

[1] Name of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

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753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembowe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to
787 offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembowe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

*Record of G.W. 8/11/37*

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kilubili, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nseki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
186 European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is *our friend*.' . . . Food was served, then Nseki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nseki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is
[684] angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nseki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'Is it Kyala above?' (looking up).
[778] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nseki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*aside please call*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own statement. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a hill.

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adultery?' Again the bull fermented. 'It denies it.' Then Kasitile, obviously dissatisfied, spoke: 'Nzeki, three cows have slipped their calves at my home, I sent to Ndembowe and he said: "Your fathers are angry, you eat a cow, Mwakisembwe (pl) is angry; seek something", so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my billhook and cut all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it was because I did not go to BeKings to buy a bull, because I sought only a kid?' Nzeki (no longer milking the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala above has sent the breath (indaga) to discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" but see, it denied it.' Kasitile: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all over again the story of his pruning the grove and of his illness and of his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and fell sick.' Nzeki: 'But Kasitile, see! There is much illness about, Kyala has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kasitile for spoiling his divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong. He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nzeki had been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [G.W.], you are impressive (mipat), no one builds together with Europeans, he feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the illness? No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him what he thought. 'Ndembowe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades were indeed angry, but now Nzeki's oracle denies it. It really denied it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant "men".' Kasitile lowered his voice as he said this.

QUESTION: But what quarrel have they with you?

KASITILE: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . . (later on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—they are angry; I should seek something.

QUESTION: To out with whom?

KASITILE: With the village headmen . . . (later on) See Mwaipaja, I cut the grove and at once I fell ill. If you cause them doing something and fall ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry.

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of men', then the shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it. The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kasitile's [774] commentaries reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had given to Nzeki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

[767] [753] [775] [776] [778] [775] [777] [778] [774]

[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

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787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (10/2/35) Kaitila went to Nsesa in Kindi village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nzoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Nkombwe's. It said: [778] 'Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not [769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngumbi wapa imuli*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kaitila's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it [765] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the [802] mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

Questioner: What are you going to do then?

Kaitila: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with [691] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have [683] bound me may go out of my body.

Questioner: And the bull?

Kaitila: If I can find one I shall kill it.

Questioner: Who will be there?

[799] Kaitila: The priests will be there, Ngulye, Kimagwa, Mpilukwa, Mwalubwa and Mwakasukulu,[1] and also Mwaipopo (rel) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi ulalemba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwakasukulu, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills, here things are bad.

Questioner: But they also have shades?

[775] Kaitila: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and [778] they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kaitila looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Songa doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.M. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kaitila came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain?" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

Lucas: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbwanga (ante p. 81) who did not in fact come. Mwanakhombo, Kaitila's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

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Kautila: Yes indeed.
Lwezi: How your body is sick, you are coughing.
Kautila: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal.
Lwezi: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain.
Kautila: Yes, I came with it.
Lwezi: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
Kautila: Yes indeed.
Lwezi: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
Kautila: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I found someone else's land—the land of a commoner there.
Lwezi: They placed something to injure you.
Kautila paused in his narration and we asked how the 'something' operated.
Kautila: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft.
The Ilanga told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'
Kautila: No, I moved with an accusation against me.
Lwezi: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry.
Kautila: Yes, I cut a tree.
Lwezi: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are disturbing the cattle of the country.
We expressed surprise and Kautila continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Ilanga said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring us tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.'
The astonishing thing was that Kautila, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (praying to the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing K(N)yakyusa well his connection with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.
Talking of the distraction three days later, Kautila told us the Ilanga doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kings and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.'
As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with

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[763] [782] them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the ritual fails.'

Questioner: What does that mean?

[759] Kasenga: It is witchcraft!

Questioner: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

Kasenga: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the prisms gathered with the shades, they bring a chill on my body.

Questioner: Pythons? (still in surprise).

Kasenga: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

Questioner: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

Kasenga: No, they are together, look you, did not Kinegera hear? He said, 'Indeed we come, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He lowered very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njelukeza who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kinegera.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the prisms, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kinegera, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Mulisha' (M, the feminine form of the name is used).

Question: So, a white person (*umuntu, nish ingele*, p. 191) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

Kasenga: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

Kasenga: And is my home near to Kinegera's?

No, he lives at a distance.

Kasenga: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*bantu*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

[647] Questioner: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*imisuki*) on the mouth?[1] What about madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

[775] Kasenga: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails [75 T] to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 18, 113.

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indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: "Why does he not celebrate the ritual?" The witches do not come into it.

Questioner: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not?

Kasitile: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

Questioner: But your sickness?

Kasitile: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. The day after we had celebrated Nyihakima came to my place and said: "We have finished then?" I replied: "Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala." And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—"How did the doctor (the Swaga) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kimagoto and his fellows) had told him?"

Questioner: What did he mean by that?

Kasitile: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him.

Asked about Kimagoto's words: "You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: "It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

Questioner: And your reply, "You are impressive, you are"?

Kasitile: I replied: "You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat mine. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears."

Mwaipopo (the chief 1:8) had also prayed with water the night before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Aba nkwipaka nanzi ku kuyupa diya kyaa, longe nikilimpaka nanzi pa kipala lime ulaki. Nikumpaka kyala gwaa, tete gwaa, shingaka kwa.*)

Questioner:

Kasitile: Yes, when Kimagoto and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they convict Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he sacrifices a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kimagoto and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

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but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
off; we fear them!

Questioner: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are taunted?

Kasitula: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we
fear. Look you, when Mwanihosa (Mwalipopo 1:6) and I were alone
we feared to throw out the bees, we said: 'If we throw it out will they
leave?' But when Kimegera came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they
are angry.[1] We shriek when they appear.

The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help
against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft,
they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never;
they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate
matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft?
No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the
ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He
initiates the thing himself.

Questioner: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

Kasitula: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they
accuse him openly.

Questioner: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

Kasitula: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his
child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people
are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too,
because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.'
It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but
it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening,
the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the meat
meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People
say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not
confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' ...

We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
first in the country, they ate raw food, we four clans saying, 'They eat
raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] Ambyago imbasi mbilishi. The seven clans (explain also, forestry, and fishing.

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(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the owners in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatitu*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mende*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mende*) the word "black" (*atite*) is used of him metaphorically.' *And mende* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kaitita himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyondo (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kaitita was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kaitita lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

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and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries kerosene with medicine. She smears the field and sets the barricade. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pair twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the eleven men eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the women and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

How the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *not* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

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There is no single supreme power; it lies in the several heroes, in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a benefactor, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the steep edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they meant the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a hint of a cultivating people having been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ubwembe*), and The Ruler himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade enters up in the belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kaitila said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers, he is in my bellows (i.e. in my wife). It is he who came from Bulungu . . . and wished first to build at Nkambo's (i.e. where Nkambo go now live). He failed there and went to Kasantalo's and failed there and he stood Lutanga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kings make is his, and food is his. . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kabwe do not know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do, they are one with us.
>
> Questioner: And Kyala?
>
> Kaitila: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.*

* cf. J. Boes, 'Die Zwillingsgeburt bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 70, Jahrgang, 201 (1938); 'Von den Leben von Neugeborenen Kindern', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Band xxxv (1938), p. 170.

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The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the nut of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The soldier, not the living Kyungu, go to the graves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*Ba kapuka bita twene*).'

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *ifingula* which is still used by chiefs.

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pasi*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*kumunge*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was conspicuously interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*mwela*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *bela*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *bela* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the unwholeness, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is understood by the fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a [new heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mbasi' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'.

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is also used in the sense of 'the Lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a community or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 203-5, 211 *et passim*.

[2] P. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, pp. 311-2.

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is illustrated in the references made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 23, 25). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The current version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the berry that shrivels. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker asks his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the cattle they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1935 conservatives like Kaitilo sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be called on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kaitilo's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kaitilo's disease, and Kaitilo rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.' The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1935—Kaitilo added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily as an addition to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1935 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a continuous or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

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Mr cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in heaven 'above'. The *implications* of *kumunya* (above) have changed along with the *implications* of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the *shadow* (*shinyuli*), the witches (*abalozi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo ya bantu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the traditional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when men are fond raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within ten miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us as'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the *rules of avoidance*, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

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out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupalapa*) and *also a symbol of confession* and an of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 135). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and princes, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-111) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry person who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is upright—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] Analysed this earlier, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, n. s. 56 (1954), pp. 230-8.

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killed that the dead man may be received by the shades of his lineage, and his immediate kin eat digbi medicines with him for the last time, is marked.

Marriages and funerals, and in a lesser degree births, are occasions for gatherings of kinsmen in Western society—such a penetrating study of kinship as *The Forsyte Saga* bears adequate witness to this—but the gathering of kinfolk is a ceremonial rather than a ritual.[1] The attendance of the Fwanyo men at Anne Ann's burial service is in no way essential to the service, though it is felt to be a mark of respect and 'proper feeling' on their part to come. So also at Nyakyusa Christian funerals, the attendance of relatives and fellow villagers is conventional—people are shocked if they do not come—but the peace of the departed is not thought to depend upon his kinsmen filling over or his grave and celebrating the 'farewell'; the ritual element in the concern of his fellow Christians, led by the priest or elder, inspection of kinship connexions. The conventions are binding, however. Though a kinsman or village neighbour is not accused of having killed his fellow if he fails to come to the funeral, nevertheless it would cause offence if he did not come, being free to do so, and should he go to work in the fields on the day of the funeral of a grown man, a neighbour, his position would be intolerable.

At a Christian funeral the emphasis all through is on resurrection and life. The hymns sung to comfort the mourners and the prayers and words of the burial service stress resurrection: 'This corruption has put on incorruption, this mortality immortality' . . . 'the body of the flesh is buried, but the body of the spirit rises.' . . . 'Our friend is not dead but liveth.' . . . 'Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave (*hayaka*) where is thy victory?' And the weeping, though extravagant to English eyes, is much more restrained than among pagans. Again and again we were told by Christians: 'We do not fear death as the pagans do', and certainly fear is not played up as in the pagan ritual. As one Christian put it: 'No Christian smears himself with mud; only the pagans fear very much as a death, they are drunken, but we do not fear, we say: "Indeed I shall die, but I shall rise again", so we do not smear ourselves with mud and grieve very much. . . . We say: "Why mud? We shall meet with him above."'[2] And there is no hair shaving or other purification, for the mourners are not identified with the corpse.

[1] For a discussion of this distinction, cf. op. cit., p. 4.

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We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*abanu balipa*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'mere abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the horror felt by 'wrestling over' a man dying between madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional pictures of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has rescued me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come over', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some like: 'He is risen',

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leap in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is resurrected 'in the body of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confessing Christians are but one in six, it is in most's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines, the right persons, the right order of events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective—but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian traditions; it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: 'If a pagan dreams of converse (ukusangula) with shades, he fears death; if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

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was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and fled alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *kipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no ablution and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is supreme and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, ulwangalafu (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the company, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the company was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ibilonge). A very beautiful divan (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ubulali, pl. imilali) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four five mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor*. These mats were naturally of exactly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the divan. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ifinsiko (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of sewing here (urukoye, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana leaf. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ulwamipala. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by gestures the present emotions the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that

* Cf. Fülleborn, p. 80.

(3) Lehmann E-1 (1931)191: FNT Ngonde FNT
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he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*vitungulu*)[1] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an ensutgere, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)[2] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[3] was fastened at the upper end of the sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your rungi"[4], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "Unwe wewe Kyaro" (You are one of Kyaro! i. e. You Europeans know everything!)

*After this there was no more delay* in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[5], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ulwenge* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

*After these interesting communications* I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *ulwenge*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[6].

9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amalumbo* gave me several opportunities for inquiries. On one occasion,

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[1] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 6 *vitungulu* (Sing.); Mwilumuta, p. 191: *lwigulu* (Ruvinga).

[2] Cf. Mwilumuta, p. 270: *ifingila* (Ruvinga).

[3] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophlei, „Sassy-bark") is the strongest Erythrophlein which produces the most typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. E. O. Simmons: Philippinenstudien VII). Archiv der Schmiedeberg 67 A, No. 6, Deutschlip 1909, p. 6).

[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 51; Mwenebg, p. 120; Pfeiderer, p. 208.

[5] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning can be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *ukwa ubi ngalimo amaka*, in this wood is power. This word is therefore, a parallel to the *Austronesian*, especially *Polynesian* word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking", Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde, I. Reihe, Ethnographie, Vol. I. Leipzig 1922. If the Nyakyusa relates to any fact a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyaro, or he names it directly "Kyaro" (cf. Mwenebg, p. 110 [191, 242]).

[6] Cf. Pfeiderer, p. 271, fig. 136: Schematical arrange of a round-hut (to also to be found with the Nyakyusa and Ankole).